

Miss Prism. That would be delightful. Cecily, you will read your Political Economy in my absence. The chapter on the Fall of the Rupee you may omit. It is somewhat too sensational. Even these metallic problems have their melodramatic side. *{Goes do-sr* the garden with Dr. Chasuble.}*
Cecily. *{Picks up books and throws them back on table.}* Horrid Political Economy! Horrid Geography! Horrid, horrid German!

Enter Merriman with a card on a silver.

Merriman. Mr. Ernest Worthing has just Driven over from the station. He has brought his luggage with him.

Cecily. *{Takes the card and reads it}* "Mr. Ernest Worthing, B. 4, The Albany, W." Uncle Jack's brother'. Did you tell him Mr. Worthing was in town?

Merriman. Yes, Miss. He seemed very much disappointed.

I mentioned that you and Miss Prism were in the garden. He said he was anxious to speak to you privately for a moment.

Cecily. Ask Mr. Ernest Worthing to come here. I suppose

you had better talk to the housekeeper about a room for him.

Merriman. Yes, Miss. *[Merriman goes off]*

Cecily. I have never met any really wicked person before. I

feel rather frightened. I am so afraid he will look just like every one else. *[Enter Algernon., very gay and debonair.]*

He does!

Algernon. *[Raising his hat.]* You are my little cousin Cecily,

I'm sure.

Cecily. You are under some strange mistake. I am not little.

In fact, I believe I am more than usually tall for my age.

[Algernon is rather taken aback.] But I am your cousin

Cecily. You, I see from your card, are Uncle Jack's brother, my cousin Ernest, my wicked cousin Ernest.

Algernon. Oh! I am not really wicked at all, cousin Cecily,

You musn't think that I am wicked.

Cecily. If you are not, then you have certainly been deceiving

us all in a very inexcusable manner. I hope you have not

been leading a double life, pretending to be wicked and being

really good all the time. That would be hypocrisy.

Algernon. *[Looks at her in amazement.]* Oh! Of course I have

been rather reckless.

Cecily. I am glad to hear it.

Algernon. In fact, now you mention the subject, I have been

very bad in my own small way.